

IF CIGARETTES CONTAIN ATROPINE

Smoking Found Beneficial In Treating Cases of Asthma

By David M. Cleary
Science Writer

Smoking isn't always bad for who tried the cigarettes, the in-son weed can be, and he feels you, despite the charges that it increase was greater than 10 per cent — which often is the difference between pain and comfort. In West Berlin, smoking has been used with beneficial results in the treatment of asthma.

But Dr H. Hersheimer of the Free University of Berlin makes it clear that it wasn't ordinary cigarettes that he gave to asthmatic patients. They were a kind in which the tobacco had a low nicotine content, and he added a solution of atropine to each cigarette before it was smoked.

"There is no doubt that the inhalation of atropine smoke has a beneficial effect on lung function in bronchial obstruction," reported Dr. Hersheimer in the British Medical Journal.

ATROPINE ACTS to increase the vital capacity (the amount the lungs can breathe) and gives a feeling of relief in mild to moderate cases of chronic asthma, according to the doctor.

He notes that atropine isn't much good if given by injection or by mouth, but his experiments in inhaling it through cigarettes cause the doctor to say quite a few years ago, and in textbooks hold atropine in the reduced commercially as "asthma treatment of asthma is not justified".

The extent to which breathing RESULTS with the special atropine increased after smoking pine-and-tobacco cigarettes are the drug-treated cigarettes varied, about the same as with jimson weed.

THE CHARLESTON GAZETTE:
Charleston, South Carolina
January 21, 1960

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ranging from five to 48 per cent. weed. Dr. Hersheimer admits, capable of dilating the tiny passages of the lungs to permit better breathing can be administered by atomizers or as aerosol sprays. Most doctors are likely to stick with these safe limits.

THE IMPROVEMENT usually came within three to five minutes after smoking, but it was the 39 patients who tried them developed a cough, which causes to 30 minutes, before the vital capacity to fall, according to Dr. Hersheimer.

Duration of the improvement was also variable. All the patients who had greater ability to breathe maintained their sense of well-being an hour and a half after smoking. But then the effect began to wear off; it had been completely dissipated in all patients at the end of three hours.

Dr. Hersheimer's approach to asthma relief through smoking isn't new. Common jimson weed produces both narcotic and relaxing effects when the leaves are smoked, and can be a potent poison in large doses.

The smoke of burning jimson weed leaves was prescribed for asthmatics in the United States in the 19th century. It was the low esteem in which current son weed cigarettes still are held that caused the doctor to say quite a few years ago, and in textbooks hold atropine in the reduced commercially as "asthma treatment of asthma is not justified".

RECORD
Boston, Massachusetts
December 30, 1959

Lung Cancer Cause

A MAN who has devoted his scientific career to a study of the causes of cancer warns that air pollution is a more important factor than cigarette smoking in the increase of lung cancer.

He is Dr. Wilhelm C. Hueper, chief of the environmental section of the National Cancer Institute at Bethesda, Md., and he makes the significant observation that the upsurge in lung cancer first was noted between 1900 and 1920, several years before the practice of cigaret smoking became widespread.

Boston, having one of the most serious air pollution problems in the entire United States, cannot fail to be impressed—and disturbed—by Dr. Hueper's findings.

We have always suspected that there was a connection between our contaminated air and the fact that tuberculosis is more prevalent in Boston than in any comparable city, and the Bethesda studies support that suspicion.

The next session of the Legislature would do well to pass laws against the needless poisoning of the atmosphere by industrial smoke stacks.

Other places, notably Pittsburgh, have proved the wisdom of screening out the fumes and ashes which currently rain down upon Boston and other cities, damaging human respiratory systems and undoubtedly shortening thousands of lives.

Enlightened Massachusetts ought to be able to accomplish at least as much in the public interest.

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